

Implementing Project Safe Childhood

Project Safe Childhood seeks to enhance the national response to the growing threats to America's youth posed by online sexual solicitation, abuse, and child pornography. As with PSN, PSC will depend upon strong leadership by the Attorney General and by the U.S. Attorneys in every judicial district. Project Safe Childhood will of course be successful only through the strong support and efforts by all federal, state, and local partners in law enforcement, and by non-profit and other private groups. But U.S. Attorneys will be charged with taking the lead in implementing PSC and reporting the results to the Attorney General.

In order for implementation of PSC to begin, it is critical for every U.S. Attorneys' office to become familiar with the goals of PSC and to establish a point person to coordinate its efforts in this initiative. Therefore, U.S. Attorneys are asked to complete the following preliminary tasks within two weeks of the Attorney General's call to action:

1. Each U.S. Attorney should review the major components of the program described in Part IV and summarized to the right.
2. Each U.S. Attorney should identify and designate a PSC Coordinator, a lead staff attorney within his or her office that will be responsible for coordinating the local PSC partnership and serving as a PSC liaison with the Department. The PSC Coordinator's identity and contact information should be reported to the Executive Office for U.S. Attorneys (EOUSA).

Implementation of PSC by U.S. Attorneys and their designated PSC Coordinators will be achieved through three major steps: building partnerships, strategic planning, and implementing accountability measures.

Components of Project Safe Childhood

- Integrated partnerships of federal, state, and local law enforcement investigating and prosecuting offenders, and identifying, rescuing, and assisting victims
- Participation in coordinated national initiatives
- Increased federal involvement in child exploitation cases
- Training of federal, state, and local law enforcement
- Increased efforts to raise community awareness and educate the public

Building PSC Partnerships

The key to successful implementation of PSC will be to develop and foster meaningful partnerships between federal, state, and local law enforcement, as well as with non-profit and private entities, within every judicial district. In many districts, existing law enforcement partnerships are already focused on child exploitation issues on a collaborative basis, such as through a strong ICAC task force or a more informal network. The ICAC task forces are central to PSC, as they represent an existing coalition of state, local, and federal agents and prose-

cutors focusing on child exploitation cases, and U.S. Attorneys are therefore strongly encouraged to seek out their local ICAC task force, where applicable, as a key first step to building their PSC coalition. In other districts, more initiative must be taken in order to bring together law enforcement organizations that are, or are willing to become, dedicated to focusing on this area.

Whether by tapping into existing coalitions or by forming new ones, U.S. Attorneys are encouraged to be flexible and creative in building PSC partnerships that best utilize the resources available in their districts, and that most effectively address the child exploitation issues prevalent in their districts. This includes reaching out to non-law enforcement partners early in the process, such as victim service providers who can play an important role in the strategic planning process in light of the focus of PSC on rescuing child victims.

The following is a non-exhaustive list of potential public partners in PSC, to whom U.S. Attorneys should look in building partnerships in their district. (Appendices B and C list national and state resources.)

- ❖ Federal law enforcement agencies with a local presence
- ❖ ICAC task forces in their district, including all agencies that are affiliated with an ICAC task force through a signed Memorandum of Understanding
- ❖ Chiefs of police, sheriffs, and other state law enforcement officers in the district
- ❖ State and local prosecutors
- ❖ NCMEC
- ❖ Internet safety programs

- ❖ Child advocacy centers, victim advocacy groups, and victim service organizations
- ❖ Medical service providers
- ❖ Parental groups
- ❖ School administrators and school resources officers
- ❖ Educators and leaders of extra-curricular activities

The partnership-building phase will be critical for U.S. Attorneys in developing the relationships and obtaining the information necessary to execute the strategic-planning phase. U.S. Attorneys should identify the partners that will help them lead the local PSC partnership, collect the information necessary for assessing the needs of their district and drafting the strategic plan, and secure the commitments of their partners in the goals of PSC. Whether by organizing formal PSC meetings in their district or by arranging more informal communications, U.S. Attorneys will engage their partners in discussions on the goals of PSC and the commitments and responsibilities of each partner in implementing the initiative.

Local Strategic Planning

A collaborative strategic-planning process within each district will help PSC partnerships nationwide to implement the core components of the initiative. Ultimately, each U.S. Attorney will be responsible for completing the strategic plan and for ensuring that it facilitates effective implementation of PSC within his or her district. But the U.S. Attorneys are strongly encouraged to consult closely with their partners, including any ICAC task forces within their districts and federal investigative partners operating locally, in collecting information,

formulating a strategy, and drafting the strategic plan to attack the components of PSC. U.S. Attorneys are asked to complete their strategic plans and submit them to EOUSA within 90 days after PSC Coordinators must be designated.

Each U.S. Attorney's strategic plan should include background information to help in framing the district's present capacity to address child exploitation issues, and to summarize the early results of partnership-building efforts. This should include the following information:

- a. A narrative history of the efforts within the district to address computer-facilitated exploitation of children.
- b. The number and type of child exploitation cases charged and prosecuted in federal court in the preceding two years.
- c. An identification and description of partners engaged, or planning to be involved, in the local PSC coalition.
- d. A description of the capacity and resources (including forensics examination resources) of the local PSC law enforcement partners.

In addition, each strategic plan should address the ways in which the district's partners will coordinate and utilize their resources in order to fulfill the goals of PSC identified in Part III. Specifically, the strategic plan should address the following issues:

1. *Integrating the Efforts of PSC Partners to Investigate and Prosecute Child Exploitation Cases, and to Identify and Rescue Child Victims*

In every district, it is the goal of PSC that the varied efforts by law enforcement officials to pursue child exploitation offenders

and protect victims become better coordinated. Accordingly, each district's strategic plan will provide guidance to its PSC law enforcement partners to coordinate the execution of child exploitation leads and cases. Specifically, each district's strategic plan should address protocols for the handling of the following types of leads and cases, listed in no particular order of priority:

- ❖ Investigative leads from NCMEC.
- ❖ Child-victim identification program (CVIP) leads from NCMEC.
- ❖ Case leads from national operations conducted by the FBI Innocent Images Unit and CEOS.
- ❖ Case leads from other national operations.
- ❖ Cases instigated or received by one of the law enforcement officials located within the district.
- ❖ Other child-victim identification leads from national operations or from local PSC partners.

In addressing the local procedures for handling each of these types of leads and cases, the strategic plan should include the following basic components:

- a. The roles of the respective PSC partners.
- b. A discussion of the relevant local, state, and federal statutes; sentencing guidelines or punishment provisions; charging practices; custodial resources; and any other factors that bear in the determination of case responsibilities, with a view towards ensuring that offenders are prosecuted in a jurisdiction that can assess an optimal penalty for their conduct.

- c. The plan for developing a de-confliction mechanism that will ensure that targets of a particular law enforcement agency are known to the PSC partners, in order to avoid duplication of law enforcement resources and to make sure that officials do not put each other at risk through separate investigations of the same target.
- d. A discussion of the resources available to PSC law enforcement partners (including investigative and prosecutorial expertise).
- e. An identification of the computer forensic examination resources available to PSC law enforcement partners, and how these resources might be expanded if necessary.

2. Providing for Local PSC Participation in National Initiatives

As explained in Part III, a key priority of PSC is to maximize the impact of national child exploitation investigations conducted by national representatives from the FBI, ICE, USFIS, Secret Service, and the ICAC program, and frequently coordinated by the Criminal Division's CEOS. Such operations result in thousands of leads being sent out to communities across the nation. In addition, NCMEC collects leads through its CyberTipline and distributes them throughout the country. And NCMEC's CVIP facilitates efforts to identify and rescue victims of child exploitation by sending leads to communities across the nation.

However, given the volume of these leads and the resource constraints affecting law enforcement at all levels, many of these leads are not pursued and their status is not always tracked. The impact of these operations will be enhanced significantly through the nationwide network of PSC coalitions

being formed in every judicial district, where each PSC team can receive these leads and coordinate how they will be handled to ensure that the available resources are expended in the most effective and efficient manner. PSC teams should also provide the necessary follow-up to ensure that the status of these leads is appropriately tracked.

Each strategic plan, in addressing local protocols for these cases as described above, will account for the ways in which the PSC coalition will handle case leads from national initiatives. The goal is to maximize the impact of these national operations by prioritizing leads and coordinating available resources so that local PSC partners effectively pursue as many leads as possible. The strategic use of collective resources of the PSC teams will maximize the number of leads pursued and provide a mechanism to track the leads.

3. Increasing Federal Investigations and Prosecutions in Child Exploitation Cases

As described in Part III, in some states the relevant statutes and sentencing provisions provide sufficient tools and criminal penalties to allow law enforcement to effectively find and punish offenders. However, the laws in many states are weaker than governing federal law, either by failing to provide an administrative subpoena power, by classifying some child exploitation offenses as misdemeanors, or by allowing the possibility of unacceptably low sentences. Other local factors such as charging practices or custodial, investigative, and prosecutorial resources may prevent offenders at the local level from being punished as severely as is possible under the federal system. A key priority of PSC is for federal investigators and prosecutors to bring all their resources to bear, where necessary, to ensure that investigations of child exploitation crimes are effectively con-

ducted, and that offenders receive optimal punishment for their crimes.

Each strategic plan will provide a discussion of the need for enhanced federal involvement in investigations and prosecutions of Internet-based crimes against children in the district, based on the status of the state and local laws governing those cases. This discussion should identify and describe the disparities between the federal and the governing state statutes and sentencing guidelines in the district. Any other factors such as charging practices, custodial resources, and availability of investigative and prosecutorial resources that may impact the need for enhanced federal involvement in those cases should also be addressed.

Project Safe Childhood “will coordinate in seeking the stiffest penalties possible, to be sure we keep these criminals away from our children.”

Attorney General Alberto R. Gonzales,
February 15, 2006

In districts where there is an identified need for increased federal involvement in child exploitation cases, the strategic plan’s discussion should address the planned approach to achieving this objective. Specifically, the strategic plan should explain the strategy for increasing federal investigations and prosecutions of child exploitation cases, identify the resources that can be utilized, and establish expectations for this effort. The results of this analysis should also be reflected in the protocols discussed in the strategic plan. The goal of PSC is to ensure that the optimal amount of punishment is achieved in child exploitation cases. Therefore, the increases in federal involvement in child exploitation cases should be directed in substantial part to those types of cases where federal prosecution will make the greatest difference in the consequences to the offender.

4. Providing Appropriate Training to Law Enforcement Officials

In order for law enforcement in each district to be effective in finding and prosecuting offenders, and in identifying and rescuing the victims of child exploitation offenses,



we must ensure that they receive proper instruction on the technological aspects of working these cases, as well as the protocols for pursuing leads from NCMEC and national operations. PSC must therefore aim to expand the opportunities for law enforcement at all levels to be trained appropriately. Accordingly, each district’s strategic plan will develop a strategy to address the training needs of federal, state, and local partners. The Department will provide PSC partners with further information on the training that is available through NCMEC, the Office of Justice Programs, the National Advocacy Center, and other sources.

5. Coordinating Local Public Awareness and Education Campaigns

An important facet of PSC is to educate communities about the problems facing children from sexual exploitation and abuse facilitated by technology. This includes awareness campaigns directed at children, parents, and society in general, as well as targeted educational programs aimed at providing parents and children with the tools and information they need to avoid the dangers of predation and to use technology in a safe and responsible manner. While PSC will include national efforts to enhance awareness about this issue and educate the public, PSC partnerships in each district can supplement this effort by improving upon existing efforts to impact local communities across the country.

Each district's strategic plan should therefore address the ways in which the PSC coalition will coordinate existing programs and help to facilitate an expansion of those programs. Specifically, the strategic plan should:

- a. Identify PSC partners currently conducting awareness, educational, and other outreach programs in the district, and describe their programs.
- b. Describe the perceived community needs and opportunities for expansion of the existing awareness, educational, and other programs.
- c. Consider ways in which PSC partners can facilitate the growth of existing awareness, educational, and other programs within the district.

The role of the PSC coalitions in achieving the goals of this objective will thus be a facilitative one. The strategic plan will take inventory of the programs already being

provided within the district, and identify opportunities for centralization and growth. The PSC partnership will help to coordinate the programs being offered within a district and maximize the benefits of these programs in impacting the local communities. And local PSC partnerships may be able to take greater advantage of educational and awareness materials developed with funds awarded through the Office of Justice Programs and community education materials developed and used by the ICAC task forces, as well as other educational and awareness programs being used by local communities.

Ensuring Accountability

Through the formation of PSC partnerships and the development of district-specific strategic plans, U.S. Attorneys will be required to seek commitments from their local partners and, in turn, commit themselves and those partners to the goals of PSC. But PSC aims to ensure that law enforcement officials and their partners continue to expand their efforts to protect children from the threats of sexual abuse, enticement, and child pornography. Therefore, as with PSN, U.S. Attorneys will be required to provide semi-annual reports to EOUSA updating the progress of their district's partnership in achieving the goals of PSC, beginning with the first report six months after strategic plans are due.

EOUSA will provide additional details on the contents of the semi-annual PSC reports after collecting and processing the PSC strategic plans. In general, each U.S. Attorney will be expected to report on the progress of his or her district's coalition in executing the strategic plan and achieving the goals of PSC. For instance, the report should assess the level of integration among law enforcement in the district; detail the level of involvement of the PSC partnership

in national operations; update the assessment of training needs in the district in light of training that has been received; and summarize community awareness and educational efforts in the district. The semi-annual report should also describe challenges and obstacles that have been encountered during local implementation of PSC, and especially in the coordination, investigation, and prosecution of cases. Additionally, the report should include at least the following information:

- a. The number of federal child exploitation cases involving the Internet initiated during the six-month period.
- b. The number of federal child exploitation cases involving the Internet charged during the six-month period, including the total number of defendants charged in those cases.
- c. The number of federal child exploitation cases involving the Internet resulting in convictions during the six-month period, including the total number of defendants convicted in those cases.
- d. The number and length of sentences imposed in federal child exploitation cases involving the Internet during the six-month period.
- e. The number of child victims identified during the six-month period.
- f. Narrative descriptions of notable cases or other successes by PSC partners.

Accountability to the goals of PSC will be measured in other ways as well. Through leadership by the Office of Justice Programs,

the ICAC program will develop an effective reporting mechanism in order to accurately record, for each ICAC task force, the number of investigations opened, arrests, state and local prosecutions, referrals for federal investigation or prosecution, sentences imposed, and child victims identified or rescued, among other relevant data. This will help PSC partners to obtain a more complete understanding of the number of child exploitation cases being investigated and prosecuted in each district. And steps will be taken in order to receive an accurate understanding of the number and types of investigations being conducted in child exploitation cases by the federal investigative agencies.

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